HAWKESBURY EQUINE VETERINARY CENTRE

WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER

Winter is upon us and these cooler months are an ideal time to perform all of your horse's routine care, such as teeth and vaccinations along with castrating colts when the flies are not around.

We will be running **our bi-annual discounted healthy horse package** through the month of **AUGUST** with great savings. The package will include; a physical examination, oral examination, routine dental rasp, tetanus and strangles booster, faecal egg count and an Equest plus tape wormer all for **$230** in field (plus mileage) or **$200** at clinic. Following on from the success of our dental day, we are also offering **further discounts on dental work for those who bring their horses to the clinic** for their healthy horse package or dental work.
This will bring the price of **DENTALS** back to **$100 plus sedation or $80 plus sedation** if taken in conjunction with **Healthy Horse Package**. At the clinic we have nurses to help along with safe working crushes under cover where our vets can provide the most professional and thorough service with the horse safely restrained and handled.
In other news, HEVC have seen an increase in the number of colics recently. This is common in winter and is thought to be related to decreased water intake and decreased fibre +/- higher sand consumption as the pasture growth slows through the cooler months. We have put some information in this newsletter on how to test for sand along with tips for preventing colic through winter.
Finally, as spring approaches we start to look towards breeding season with foals being born from end of July. This newsletter has some information on your mare's last trimester of pregnancy.

OUR NEXT FREE RANDLAB GASTIC SCOPING DAY WILL BE ON 31st JULY 2018 – PLEASE CONTACT RECEPTION TO BOOK YOUR SPOT. **$60 sedation*

How to perform a faecal sand sediment test:

1. Collect a large handful of fresh manure that has NOT touched the ground (top of the pile)
2. Place into bucket of water and break down all the pellets.
3. Leave for 5 min
4. Decant off all the water and manure leaving bucket on an angle
5. Check the bottom of the bucket for sand
6. Anything greater than 1 teaspoon of sand is considered significant
7. If you find sand in your horses manure contact vet

Please note that some horses can have large volumes of sand in their bowel but NOT pass it in the manure. For this reason preventing the consumption of sand is always recommended.

THE LATE TERM PREGNANT MARE

The average gestation length of a mare is approx. 340 days (320-365 days). During the last 8 weeks of pregnancy the foal will double in size and weight. This means that there are great physical demands placed on the late term pregnant mare during this stage. During their last 30 days of pregnancy many mares are sluggish, act depressed, eat less and generally just look huge and miserable.
As mares near foaling, there is often a plaque of swelling (edema) that develops from the udder forward along the under-belly. This results from interference with the mare's circulation from the large weight of the pregnancy. Although this can become quite impressive as foaling approaches, it usually does not indicate a problem and resolves quickly after the mare foals. Often mare's hind legs "stock up" or swell with the added weight, but this also usually resolves quickly after foaling.
FEEDING THE LATE-TERM PREGNANT MARE – During the last 3 months of pregnancy your mare's nutrition should be gradually increasing up to the time she foals with a complete balanced mare and foal pellet/mix (containing correct levels of vitamins and minerals) along with roughage as per feed instructions.
VACCINATIONS – Mares should have their tetanus and strangles booster and be de-wormed at least 4 weeks prior to their due date.

Note: We now have available special Foaling kits to assist clients and are available for $160.

HEVC sends out quarterly newsletters. To receive these by email please call the office on (02) 4577 4611 or check our facebook page.

STEPS TO HELP PREVENT COLIC IN WINTER

Colic doesn't follow a calendar. Virtually any horse can be stricken with gut pain at any time of year. That said, there are certain types of colic that are more likely to occur in winter than at other times of year. The colics most associated with the cold weather months are impaction related. When ingested feed stops moving through the horse's gut efficiently, the material can accumulate and form a blockage. Feed and gas then back up behind the blockage, causing distention of the intestine and associated pain. A common type of impaction in the Hawkesbury area is sand impactions. Sand impaction colics are also more common in winter, as the pasture levels decease leaving horses to pick up more sand as they graze, as well as less fibre to help expel the sand from the gastrointestinal system.

Some steps to help prevent impaction related colic in your horse through winter include:

➢ KEEP YOUR HORSE HYDRATED

Any discussion of winter colic needs to start with hydration. Impactions are more likely to form with dry feed, and horses, for a number of reasons, tend to drink less in the winter. In winter you need to ensure that their water does not freeze over and studies have shown that horses will drink up to 45% more water if it is heated as opposed to ambient near freezing temperatures. Adding water (warm water if available) to their feed is an excellent way to improve water consumption in winter along with added salt to help encourage drinking. Feeding soaked feeds, high in soluble fibres eg. Easi Fibre, Maxisoy, Speedibeat etc has the benefit of increasing the amount of water reservoir in the large intestine.

➢ PROVIDE AS MUCH TURN OUT AS POSSIBLE

Pasture living keeps a horse's gut moving. Not only is the physical activity of walking around beneficial, but continual grazing is what they are designed for. That's why you should strive for frequent, small meals to mimic the natural, healthiest eating patterns of a horse at pasture.

➢ PROVIDE PLENTY OF ROUGHAGE & FIBRE

When pasture dies back in winter, hay replaces grass as the foundation of a horse's diet. A horse on adequate pasture full-time will be continuously digesting water-rich grass, ideal for preventing colic. In winter, however, meals of dry hay are more common and can be associated with colic. Not only is drier forage more likely to create intestinal blockages, but the gut slows in the hours spent waiting for hay to be served twice a day. The best wintertime feeding practices include frequent, primarily hay-based meals. Using a slow feeder to make hay available to your horse 24-7 is a great idea.

➢ TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT SAND INGESTION

As the pasture levels drop, horses will start picking up more sand as they graze. This can become even worse after rain as the sand tends to splash up onto the grass stems and stick to the grass more than when it is dry. Sand ingestion can cause impactions but can also cause irritation of the large bowel resulting in diarrhoea. If you live on particularly sandy soil it is recommended to feed hay in slow feed hay nets with a rubber mat underneath so that the hay does not fall onto the ground and also use no-tip feed bins to stop the horses eating sand as their attempt to eat the bits of their feed that has fallen onto the grass. Often preventing of sand ingestion on sandy soils is difficult and the routine feeding of Psyllium husks (1 cup per day for 5 days for a 500kg horse) at the beginning of every month is also recommended to help expel any sand sitting in the large bowel of your horse. It is important to note that Psyllium should NOT be fed for more than 5 days in a row as the microbes in the hind gut will start to digest the psyllium instead of letting it pass through, and thus it will become less effective.